

The Open Mike^{District 2}



A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 1, Number 6

September 2005

Hurricane Katrina Update

County Fire and Rescue, Urban Search and Rescue Units Deployed to Gulf Region to Provide Hurricane Assistance

Montgomery County welcomes home the forty members of Montgomery County's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) deployed to Hancock County, Mississippi, to assist in search and rescue efforts in the Gulf Region following the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. On Tuesday, August 30, 2005 Maryland Task Force One (MDTF-1) was activated and deployed by FEMA to the Gulf States region. They were involved in many searches and were responsible for three "live" rescues, two on their day of arrival, Wednesday, August 31 and one other on Friday, September 2, 2005. They continued search operations through Sunday, September 4, 2005.

On Labor Day morning, 75 members of Montgomery County's Fire and Rescue Service, along with numerous pieces of apparatus, were deployed by Montgomery County to New Orleans to provide relief for and assistance to the New Orleans Fire Department for at least two weeks. A caravan of 20 Montgomery County vehicles being escorted by County police pulled out of the Public safety Training Academy, in Rockville, Maryland on Monday morning, September 5. The Montgomery County contingent was joined by about one dozen EMS units from across the State making up a EMS Strike team coordinated by the Maryland Institute of Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS). The MIEMSS EMS Strike team, comprised of about 45 personnel, will report to West Jefferson Medical Center to support EMS response, in-patient ER care and body recovery. In all more than 30 vehicles and over 100 persons from Maryland will be traveling to Louisiana as part of this effort.

Our heartfelt thanks and appreciation and go with Montgomery County's fire and rescue and USAR teams, and our thoughts and prayers are with survivors and their families in the South and beyond.

Montgomery County has set up a County hotline at (240) 777-2600 that residents can contact for any information regarding Katrina, including donations and other ways you can help.

Additionally, residents can also contact the [American Red Cross of the National Capital Area](http://www.americanredcross.org/) at (703) 584-8400, or via e-mail at ncacinfo@redcrossnca.org. To donate blood or plasma, please call 1-800-GIVELIFE (1-800-448-3543).

A Moment at the Mike:**The Autumn Rush**

Welcome back to what I like to think of as the second half – after the brief intermission provided by a welcome but swampy summer, we're back for the crisper fall days and cooler nights. The County Council resumes its regular schedule of Tuesday sessions beginning today (September 6), and public hearings and committee meetings occur with greater and great frequency as September progresses.



Mike Knapp

system is often cited by new residents as the single most important factor influencing their decision to live and work in Montgomery County; clearly, our investment in education has continued to be worth it.

[See the calendar below for the complete September schedule](#), and if there's anything there that catches your eye that you'd like to comment on, be sure to [contact me and let me know](#). While the Council has its own set of priorities, I'd like to talk a little bit about what I'd like to see us accomplish in the coming months.

Education

With the return of autumn comes the return to the classroom for thousands of teachers, administrators, and students across the county. MCPS and Montgomery College continue to provide access to one of the best educations in the country and, as a member of the Council's Education Committee, I'll continue to work closely with education leaders and advocates to ensure that our schools, teachers and administrators have the resources they need to continue to deliver an education that is second to none. The quality of our education

Gangs

I also know many parents are concerned about the unfortunate gang violence that occurred over the summer in Wheaton. As a county resident, and a member of the Council's Public Safety committee, I, too, am concerned. I'm working with MCPS, county police, and many of the non-profit organization around the region to see what can be done to put into place more and better after school and summer programs for our children. We also need to take seriously our ability to respond forcefully and immediately when gang violence does occur, and one of my ongoing priorities is continued support for public safety officials so they can address violent problems quickly and safely.

Having said that, I think it's important to remember that while gangs and gang violence are a real issue, the vast majority of our kids are decent kids, doing decent things, and leading decent lives. In our efforts to invest in initiatives that help us crack down on the gang problem, we don't want to lose sight of the fact that we need to continue to invest in activities and resources that benefit the rest of our kids. Parks, recreation and libraries continue to be a priority, but above all these things, talk to your kids. The Council had an incredibly productive and informative work session over the summer at which we heard from a number youth leaders who had a lot to say about what kids need. The clear message is that we need to hear from kids in order to address their needs. We're listening.

Accountability in Government and Budgeting

On a related note, you may have seen that the opening of the Germantown Library has been delayed. I'm as irritated by this as you. In general, I'm becoming increasingly frustrated with the county's management of key projects, and I am discussing with the executive branch ways to refine and improve the procurement and project management process. We need to be absolutely certain that key projects, like the fire stations scheduled to be built around the Upcounty, are built in the most effectively, efficiently and, to the extent possible, *on or ahead of schedule*.

We need to continue to apply the same philosophy to our budget process, ensuring we deliver an effective, efficient budget on time. The passage of my resolution requiring county government to set spending priorities – along with the fiscal discipline shown by the Council to bring us in at the charter limit – set the stage for what I hope is a much more accountable budget process for FY 2007. Later this month, the Council is scheduled to approve, for the first time ever, its own list of priorities for budget planning purposes. That's the first important step on a long journey. I'll continue to work within my committees and with my colleagues to ensure we receive regular updates from the government agencies and programs we oversee on how they are doing meeting their self-imposed FY 2006 objectives.

And, of course, hearing from you is a big part of it. I very much appreciate the comments I've received from residents around the Upcounty in response to my August newsletter, and I hope you'll continue to let me know your comments as we continue our work. For a sampling of what some of your fellow Upcounty residents are saying, [check out the "Vox Pops" section of this newsletter](#), down below.

Agriculture

The Council will be reviewing policies surrounding private institutional facilities (PIFs) in the Agricultural Reserve later this fall. As the Councilmember representing the vast majority of the county's 93,000 acre Ag Reserve, want to ensure that whatever policy the council enacts, it does so through the perspective of continuing the viability of farming as the primary use of the Ag Reserve.

Transportation

Anyone stuck in traffic in the mornings or late afternoons knows that transportation is a huge issue for our county -- and trying to use the back roads doesn't usually make things any easier. I presently serve as First Vice Chair of the [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board \(TPB\)](#), and will become its Chairman in January 2006. The TPB prepares plans and programs to ensure that federal-aid transportation funds flow to the Washington region, which includes Montgomery County. As Chairman, I'll be working to develop strategies to create dedicated sources of funding to Metro, as well as putting in place the additional oversights needed to guarantee that resources are targeted directly at needed transportation improvements and upgrades.

As always, to report problems with roads, signage, streetlights, or stoplights, contact my office through [The Upcounty Road Scholar](#), and we'll get your request in to the appropriate county and state agencies as quickly as possible.

Annual Growth Policy

The Council will likely begin its bi-annual discussion of the Annual Growth Policy in November. My objective, as we study the policy, is to ensure that Montgomery County continues to provide the kind of support and services that provide all residents with the opportunities they need to succeed. Education, jobs, health, transportation, housing ... all of it matters if we're building an economy in which everyone can pursue their own version of the American Dream. However, if the current policy is modified, *opportunity* should remain its guiding principle.

Clarksburg

I'm continuing to meet with and work with residents of Clarksburg to see to it that the appropriate modifications are taken to County Park and Planning to ensure that the community will become the one we all envisioned years ago. There is some good news – the Council recently provided the resources needed to make interim EMS services available in Clarksburg as soon as possible this year, well in advance of the permanent fire and EMS facility, which will be completed in 2009. We've also recently taken actions that should make it possible to establish services immediately in a centrally located interim facility. This avoids the need to first establish temporary services at a temporary facility, then move them to an interim site, then move them *again* once the permanent facility is completed. This way, we'll only have to move once.

There are still countless issues related to transportation and infrastructure that need to be addressed with the county government, and I'm meeting regularly with the appropriate county officials to make sure everything gets done as quickly and correctly as possible.

I invite any and all comments, questions, or concerns you may have, so feel free to [contact me](#). I'll also be holding three Open Mike meetings this month – in Darnestown, Goshen and Boyds – with more on the way in October, so if you live in or near any of those communities, please stop by and let's talk.

As always, thanks for taking the time to read my newsletter. It's my pleasure to serve.

Mike

Mike Knapp
Councilmember



Councilmember Mike Knapp

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[\[Click here for a map.\]](#)

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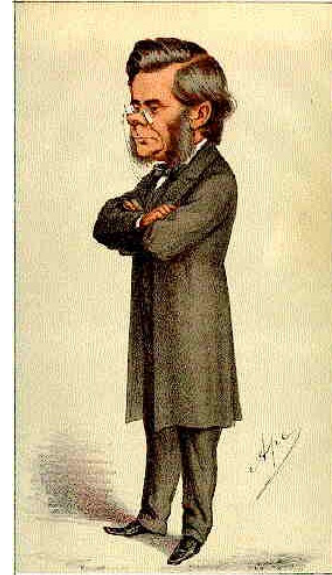
Councilmember.Knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov

The Upcounty Road Scholar

Got a road that needs repairing? A traffic light that's out? Is there a street or intersection that you think needs a stop sign or crosswalk? One of my responsibilities is to make sure someone knows about it -- and to do what I can to get you information on your question or request as quickly as possible.

I stay in regular contact with the [Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation](#) (DPWT) and the [Maryland State Highway Administration](#) (MSHA), and provide each agency with a list of projects that need addressing in the Upcounty. Both agencies receive countless requests each week, and getting a response back can take some time. So bear with me -- if you don't see a particular project listed here, that doesn't necessarily mean it has been forgotten or neglected, but rather that I haven't received an updated report on its progress this month.

With this in mind, the Road Scholar section of the newsletter provides an opportunity to give you the latest information received from DPWT, MSHA, and others on the progress of requests that have been submitted on your behalf. It's also an opportunity for you to [let me know](#) of other projects that may need to be undertaken in your community.



Got a question on the roads, sidewalks, or construction in your area? [E-mail the Road Scholar](#) and let us know.

Department of Public Works and Transportation Update

Here's the latest information I've received from DPWT, courtesy of DPWT Director Arthur Holmes:

Mullinix Mill Road at Long Corner Road (Damascus): An evaluation of this intersection by DPWT showed that northbound Long Corner Road, looking west, had limited sight distance due to overgrown foliage. Therefore, a work order has been sent for the removal of foliage along Mullinix Mill Road. Additionally, the existing 'Stop Ahead' signs along both directions of Long Corner Road will be replaced and will include supplemental 'Mullinix Mill Rd' street name plates. Along southbound Long Corner Road, the 'Stop Ahead' sign will be relocated to a more visible location approaching the intersection to bring clearer attention to the intersection. DPWT anticipates this work will be completed before the end of September.

Germantown Road at Watkins Mill Road and Wayfarer Road (Germantown): A work order has been submitted to cut the grass in the islands of all the approaches to the roundabout (except for landscaping inside the circle of the roundabout). This work will be completed as quickly as possible, if it hasn't by the time you read this.

Vox Pops

Voices From Around the Upcounty Community



A Note from Mike: I receive countless phone calls, e-mails, and letters each day. Most are passionate, many are frustrated, and a few are downright funny...but all of them are thoughtful and well-intended. I think readers of The Open Mike will be interested to hear what their Upcounty neighbors have to say, whether they're across the street or across the county. With that in mind, the "Vox Pops" section of my newsletter features highlights from some of the correspondence and phone calls I've received in my office over last month regarding FY 2007 budget priorities.

"One way to reduce the budget would be to STOP the frivolous spending on "sinkholes" like the Strathmore (\$500K/yr) and other Arts programs. We don't need them as a whole.... Another way would be to cut out the spending on illegal aliens for medical, education, free meals, welfare, "day labor" spots, Ride-On fares, etc. I think this is what the people of Montgomery want." -- *Bruce*

"I watch rising home prices with a sense of dread, to be honest. If home prices continue to escalate, and, with it, property taxes, there will be a point that we will decide it would be better for our family financially to sell the house and, with the proceeds of the sale, find a cheaper county/state to live in." -- *Dina*

"I believe it is time now to cut back on the use of school buses -- and eventually get rid of them entirely except as needed for outlying areas. It is no secret that gas prices are soaring, and will apparently continue to do so. This is one way in which enormous amounts of gas usage and traffic could be cut down....The continuous maintenance necessary could be of higher quality on fewer buses, with potentially fewer accidents." -- *Mary*



"There should be more free recreational activities in low income areas, especially areas with a high Hispanic population. There should be social workers involved in these communities or something like Linkages to Learning in MCPS to involve the parents with their children even if a parent is working three jobs. Perhaps a room or two in an apartment complex could be used. There should be computer work stations so that parents and children could learn computer skills, literacy and English courses for parents and kids and homework help. All this should help prevent kids from joining gangs and provide better job opportunities for parents." -- *Elaine*

"... unless there is a shortage of funds the HARD choices will not be made in government spending. Keep the property tax rate and income tax rates the same; do not increase them, perhaps lower them at little. There is waste in most government budgets, you just have to find them. There are pressure groups for items you want to cut. Be strong." -- *Sanford*

**BEG TO DIFFER? GOT A COMMENT? WRITE OR E-MAIL ME AT
COUNCILMEMBER.KNAPP@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD.GOV**

Historic Preservation

Preservation Commission Accepting Grant Applications

[The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission](#) is accepting applications until September 30 for matching-fund grants, totaling \$30,000, for local preservation projects to be completed in 2006.

Projects eligible for consideration include, but are not limited to: development and installation of historic district signs; walking tours of historic districts; handbooks or design guidelines; explanatory brochures for owners in historic districts; historic site brochures; feasibility studies for restoration or preservation of buildings, sites and historical artifacts owned or under the custody of non-profit groups; and public education projects such as historical and archeological surveys, slide/tape shows, lectures, videos, oral history taping/transcriptions, photographic displays or other types of exhibits on county history, and oral histories.

For applications and guidelines, please contact Susan Soderberg at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Ms. Soderberg can also be reached by calling (301) 563-3400, or via e-mail at Susan.Soderberg@mncppc-mc.org. Applications are also available online at http://www.mc-mncppc.org/historic/grants/grants_list.shtm. Applicants may submit completed forms to the commission at the above address postmarked no later than Tuesday, September 30, 2005

All applicants must match the grants in money or in-kind services. Grant winners must carry adequate insurance, as specified by the county's General Conditions of Contract, Article 15, and they must sign a contract with M-NCPPC. The Historic Preservation Commission will notify applicants of their selection by Friday, October 31, 2005.

Information for this article was originally provided in a news release from [Marion Joyce](#) at the [Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission](#).

Ag Reserve

MoCo Historical Society Sponsoring Bus Tour of Ag Reserve

In October 1980, Montgomery County adopted [The Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan](#), which carefully outlined the County's goals on land preservation. This policy marked an important component in ensuring the continued viability of agriculture; since that time, 93,000 acres, most of it in the Upcounty, have been preserved for agriculture and open space in Montgomery County, making our program a national model. The plan recognizes that in order to be in the best position to preserve farmland, we as a county must do everything we can to protect the business of farming.

The [Montgomery County Historical Society](#), along with [Celebrate Rural Montgomery](#), is sponsoring a bus tour of the agricultural reserve on **Saturday, November 5, from 9:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.**, traveling with Melanie Choukas-Bradley, author of [Sugarloaf: The Mountain's History, Geology and Natural Lore](#). The cost per person is \$50.00, which includes lunch at the [Comus Inn](#) at the foot of Sugarloaf Mountain. Participants will meet at the Beall-Dawson House, 103 W. Montgomery Avenue, Rockville, on Saturday, November 5th – but pre-paid reservations are required by Friday, October 28th. For more information, or to make your reservation, please call (301) 340-2825.



Ombudsman

The July 2005 article on historic preservation awards and efforts in the Upcounty ("Upcounty Historic Preservation Organization, Writer Honored; New Projects Progressing," July 2005) made reference to the Goshen Historic Preservation Society, and contained a quote noting that the organization had been in existence for four years. *The Open Mike* has since been notified that the correct name for the organization is the Goshen *Historical* Preservation Society, and it has been in existence for *five* years. *The Open Mike* regrets the errors.

The same article also mentioned the [preservation efforts presently underway at the Davis Mill site](#), but neglected to mention the involvement of the [Goshen Mills Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution](#). *The Open Mike* regrets the omission, and is pleased to give the organization the recognition it deserves for its support of the efforts to preserve Davis Mill.

Open Mike Tour 2005:

Join Me For An Open Mike Night In Your Community!

This autumn, I'll be making my annual Open Mike Tour of the Upcounty region to learn more about what matters to you and your neighbors when it comes to your county and community. This is an opportunity for you and your neighbors to bring your concerns, comments, suggestions, complaints, recommendations, you name it, directly to me.

If you don't see your community, or a nearby community, listed here, don't panic -- I'm still trying to schedule meetings in a number of other communities before the end of the year. Keep watching future issues of *The Open Mike* for updates.

COMMUNITY	TIME	LOCATION
Darnestown	Wednesday, September 14 , 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Darnestown Presbyterian Church 15120 Turkey Foot Road, Darnestown (map)
Goshen	Saturday, September 17 , 2005, 10:00 a.m.	Church of Nazarene 8910 Warfield Road, Gaithersburg (map)
Boyd's	Wednesday, September 21 , 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Boyd's Presbyterian Church 19901 White Ground Road, Boyds (map)
Montgomery Village	Wednesday, October 5 , 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Gaithersburg Library 18330 Montgomery Village Avenue, Gaithersburg (map)
Germantown	Saturday, October 22 , 2005, 10:00 a.m.	BlackRock Center for the Arts 12901 Town Commons Drive, Germantown (map)
Damascus	Wednesday, October 26 , 2005, 7:00 p.m.	Damascus Library 9701 Main Street, Damascus (map)

County Council Schedule for September

Regular Council sessions begin on Tuesday, September 6, 2005. Committee sessions will resume on Wednesday, September 7. County Council sessions and hearings are held at the Council offices at 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville. Schedules can change quickly, so **please check the Council's homepage for the most up-to-date information on council sessions, committee meetings, hearing schedules, and locations.**

Regular Council Sessions are in Blue.

Public Hearings and Town Meetings are in White.

Committee Meetings are in Gold.

Worksessions are in Red.

DATE	TIME	AGENDA ITEM
September 6	9:15 a.m.	REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION AND WORKSESSION - Shady Grove Master Plan
	1:30 p.m.	PUBLIC HEARING - Special Appropriation to the M-NCPPC's FY2006 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY 2005-2010 CIP for \$1.6 million for Needwood Golf Course improvements
September 7	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Planning, Housing & Economic Development</i> - ZTA 05-09, Wholesale Trade Uses 103 Zone - Shady Grove Sector Plan - Special Appropriation: M-NCPPC, \$1.6 million for Needwood Golf Course improvements
September 8	9:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Transportation & Environment / Health & Human Services</i> - OLO Memorandum Report 2005-8: Implementation of Council Action on OLO Report 2002-3, Transportation Services for Seniors and People with Disabilities
	10:00 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Transportation & Environment</i> - Executive Regulation 8-05: Taxicab fees
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Health & Human Services</i> Agenda TBD
	7:30 p.m.	PUBLIC HEARING - Amendments to ZTA 3-27, Building Height -- Measurement
September 12	9:00 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Management & Fiscal Policy</i> - Economic Indicators - Spending Affordability Guidelines for FY 2007 Capital Budget
	10:00 a.m.	WORKSESSION -- Shady Grove Sector Plan
September 13	9:15 a.m.	REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION WORKSESSION - Shady Grove Sector Plan
	7:30 p.m.	PUBLIC HEARING - FY 2007 Annual Budget Priorities and Performance Measures

September 15	9:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Education</i> - Agenda TBD
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Public Safety</i> - Status report: school fire safety inspections - Update on MDFRS Apparatus Management Plan - Update on Fire and Rescue Services in Clarksburg - Fire station design issues - Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services, and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan
	2:15 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Planning, Housing & Economic Development</i> - Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan
September 16	1:15 p.m.	TOWN HALL MEETING - Holiday Park Senior Center
September 19	9:15 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Planning, Housing & Economic Development</i> - Olney Sectional Map Amendment (G-838) - Executive Regulation 13-05, Requirements and Procedures for the MPDU Program
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Management & Fiscal Policy</i> - Council Budget Priorities (Forum on productivity and gain sharing will begin at 4:00 p.m.)
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Health & Human Services</i> - Study of HHS unmet needs - Briefing on DHHS Strategic Plan
September 20	9:15 a.m.	REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION
	1:30 p.m.	PUBLIC HEARING - Spending Affordability Guidelines for FY 2007 Capital Budget - Bill 20-05, Transmission Facility Coordination -- Amendments - Bill 23-05, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council -- Establishment - Expedited Bill 24-05, Department of Economic Development -- Non-merit position, Minority Business Affairs Manager - Bill 25-05, Consumer Protection Office -- Office -- Powers and Duties - ZTA 05-10, Telecommunications Facility -- Amendments
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Health & Human Services / Management & Fiscal Policy</i> - FY 2007 Council grants process - Follow-up discussion: OLO 2005-1, A Study of the County Government's Selection and Funding Practices for Health and Human Services and Community Development Grant Awards
September 22	9:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Transportation & Environment</i> - Review of Quarry ordinance and air pollution at asphalt plant - Briefing on transportation issues associated with federal facilities
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Management & Fiscal Policy</i> - Resolution to approve the disposition of the former Peary High School - Review of reuse process for closed schools
September 26	9:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: <i>Management & Fiscal Policy</i> - Spending Affordability Guidelines for the FY 2007 Capital Budget - Criteria for funding capital projects with bonds or current revenue

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Status report on OMB progress on improvements to capital budget system - Incentives for reduction of utility and risk management costs is county government - Discussion of one-time revenues and expenditures - Review of loans from the General Fund to other funds - Discussion of FY 2007 Operating Budget process and document - Tax rates and reserves in tax-supported funds
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Planning, Housing & Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Woodmont Triangle Amendment to the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan - ZTA 05-08, Minimum Lot Area and Transfer of Density
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Public Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Juvenile arrest policies - Driver training schools - Briefing on Police Department media services
September 27	9:15 a.m.	REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION
September 29	9:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Education / Health & Human Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-Kindergarten Services
	10:30 a.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda TBD
	2:00 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Planning, Housing & Economic Development / Health & Human Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special needs housing and homelessness
	3:30 p.m.	COMMITTEE MEETING: Planning, Housing & Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agenda TBD

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The Open Mike Wants You!

Are you sponsoring an event or having a meeting, and want to invite residents from around the county to participate? Did you or your organization win an award? If you have information you'd like to submit for possible inclusion in an upcoming issue of *The Open Mike*, please e-mail us Brian.Jones@montgomerycountymd.gov and let us know.

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